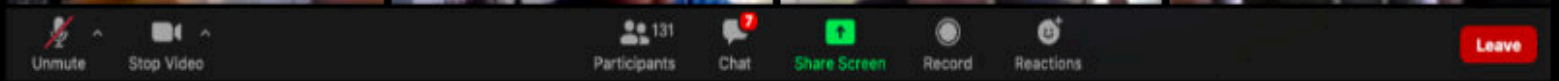




the
GATHERING
newsletter of the Church of the Redeemer

pentecost 2020





The Church of the Redeemer

162 Bloor Street West

Toronto, ON M5S 1M4

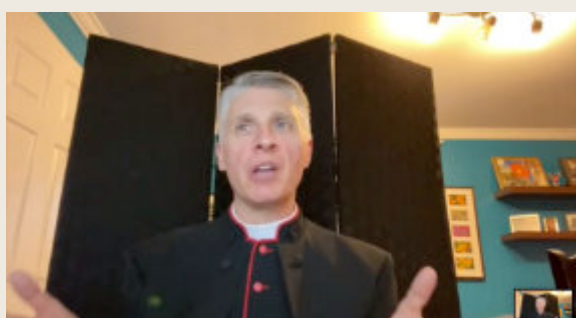
redeemer@bellnet.ca

www.theredeemer.ca

facebook.com/TheRedeemerTO/

church office: 416-922-4948

fax: 416-922-0375



Sunday – 10.30AM: Ante-communion

Join in through Zoom.
The link for the service is sent by
email on Friday evening.

Sunday – 7PM: Evensong, Taizé or Rock

A recorded service posted on
Facebook at 7PM and on the
Website at 7.30PM

Wednesday Daily Prayer

A printed order for daily prayer
posted on the website early in
the morning

Each Morning and Evening

A prayer is posted on Facebook

Standing on Holy Ground (or not): Creating Sacred Space and Seeking the Spirit "Outside the Box"

When Moses ascended Horeb, seeking to solve the mystery of the burning bush, God spoke to him and said:

"Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground."

Exodus 3.5

We don't know whether or not Moses experienced this theophany with all the drama of a Cecil B. DeMille epic, but clearly something profound happened. In that encounter with the living God the relationship between human and divine took its next step, Moses removed his sandals and walked for the first time on Holy Ground.

It is tempting to replace the mystery with magic in this story and attribute sanctity to the ground itself. But as beautiful and cherished as "spaces" are—whether it's ascending the heights of Horeb or the steps to the doors of Redeemer—holy ground is not a place on the map, but rather the space that is created when we encounter the presence of God. In the midst of our recent captivity, that has been a profound challenge.

Our world has changed dramatically. We are not able to gather on our accustomed holy ground, to worship God and share feast and fellowship with one another. It's not mountain-top moments that we desire, so much as the more mundane but gratifying experience of being with one another in the presence of God, sharing our faith.

Moreover, God's words to Moses are spoken more often—these days—in a secular context with disturbingly different

connotations. "Come no closer" is not a gentle reminder about how being in God's presence can fill us with awe, but a warning that we need to keep our distance from one another, for fear of the awful consequences of exposure to the coronavirus. And the command to remove one's sandals—which was for Moses an invitation to experience the presence of God without barriers or boundaries—is spoken as a prelude to donning the appropriate PPE—putting layers between us so that we may be kept safe. We are not where Moses was, yet we long for the same thing: exodus.

But if we depart from Moses on the mountain and fast-forward fifteen centuries, we come to Pentecost, to the moment when the people experienced God's burning desire to dwell in their midst and create sacred space.

"When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability." Acts 2.1-4

In Pentecost, we see the fire of the Holy Spirit not just dwelling among the disciples and resting on their heads but filling their hearts with God's presence that they might speak the language of grace and mercy to all peoples. Sacred space comes into being, not as a place but as a relationship, with the presence of God dwelling in each of them, binding them together as one body.

We find ourselves this Pentecost, not "all together in one place," but no less "all together." For despite encountering one another in boxes on screens, it is what happens "outside the box" that makes us one. This is the

time in the church's life where we celebrate God's abiding presence in each of us; whispering the Spirit's will, filling us with the fire of love for God and one another, and making us one. In a world of faces in boxes and broken connections, it is through the Holy Spirit that we encounter God and one another face to face. In other words, what keeps us connected, is nothing less than the presence of God.

In that spirit, I offer these prayers that were crafted to speak to the moment when our lives and our worship changed, the moment when we knew we would not be able



**THE REV'D CANON
STEVEN MACKISON**

to meet on holy ground for who knows how long, but also the moment when, I believe, the spirit called us to deepen our compassion for one another and our hope that God is redeeming all that is lost and healing all that is ill.

We are not people of fear: we are people of courage. We are not people who protect our own safety: we are people who protect our neighbours' safety. We are not people of greed: we are people of generosity. We are your people God, giving and loving, wherever we are, whatever it costs. For as long as it takes wherever you call us. Amen.

(Barbara Glasson, President of the Methodist Conference: Church of England, Coronavirus Resources)

Spirit of compassion, fill our hearts and give us peace. Give us strength to care for those around us even as we may be physically separated. Deepen our sense of compassion even in the midst of our anxiety. Keep us mindful of the many other needs in the world—conflicts, refugees, poverty, and many other illnesses besides the coronavirus—and all other concerns we name before you now. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Who are the Nations in the Land Acknowledgement?

Carolynn Bett

As the land acknowledgment is being recited, have you ever wondered why we do this and who the Anishinaabe, Wendat and Haudenosaunee are? Here is a brief guide.

Anishinaabe: These are descendants of the original peoples who have lived north of the Great Lakes for at least 15,000 years. They speak Algonkian languages and were hunters/gatherers.

Wendat: These people emerged north of the Great Lakes around 600 A.D. and their source is a mystery. They speak Iroquoian languages and were longhouse people who combined farming with hunting/gathering.

Haudenosaunee: This Iroquoian, longhouse confederacy was drawn together by the Great Peacemaker, quite possibly at the solar eclipse of Aug. 31, 1142. The participating nations were Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga and Seneca. The Tuscarora joined in 1722. Stories of the Great Peacemaker are filled with magic and mystery and he is reported to have had disciples of both genders, including Hiawatha. He is said to have been a Wendat, born in Tyendinaga and his mission was to bring the Great Law of Peace to the Haudenosaunee.

The Iroquois traditional territory is south of the Great Lakes; however, they often came north to trade particularly

during the fur trade. In 1793, the Mohawks, who were allies of the British during the US War of Independence, were expelled from the United States and were settled as United Empire Loyalists at Tyendinaga and on the Haldimand Tract along the Grand River in Ontario.

Mississaugas of the Credit are an Anishinaabe nation, whose original territory stretched from Long Point in the west to the Rouge River in the east and north from lakes Erie and Ontario to the Oak Ridges moraine.

The Mississaugas ceded land to the English so that Six Nations allies could be settled along the Grand River. The Six Nations later gave them a piece of their reserve on the Haldimand Tract, which the Mississaugas subsequently purchased.

Why do we have land acknowledgement at all?

There are a number of reasons.

Indigenous protocol required a land acknowledgment when different nations came to trade, hunt and fish in each others' hunting territory. Treaties were also renewed regularly in order to facilitate peaceful co-existence, access to sufficient food; and ensure conservation of the land for future generations.

As a gesture of respect and reconciliation, settlers give a land acknowledgment to make visible colonial incursion that is still present, to give thanks to the original caretakers of the land and to start to define our actions towards reconciliation and better care of the land. Many treaties and documents give guidance for this action. In our next article we will explore some of the treaties.



Grief and The Absence of Presence

Anne Evers

First there was the initial shock. On Thursday, March 12, we had a distanced choir rehearsal, spread out around the chancel, and discussed how to sing safely on Sunday. On Friday, Tom and I went to a small dinner party, where some precautions were taken, and we joked about not hugging goodbye. Then that night, as I stood on the subway platform waiting for the train, I read Bishop Andrew's announcement that churches would be closed until the COVID-19 crisis was over. It was a shock, but I figured we'd be back in church by Palm Sunday.

Then came the urge to panic, which I tried to control. By the end of that week, everything was closed, and lockdown had begun. We started to plan and organize. We bought dried beans, and frozen vegetables, large cuts of meat, and flour. We didn't hoard toilet paper; it was all gone.

And the losses, big and small, began to pile up. For us, a daughter unemployed, concerts and theatre performances cancelled. No choir or shape note singing. No Hot Docs. A family wedding in Brooklyn postponed. No Easter dinner with our "adopted Canadian family," and our other daughter unable to visit from Ottawa.

Eventually the initial "how is this going to work?" anxiety died down. Tom was set up to work at home. My daughter was receiving CERB and digitally socializing with her friends. Redeemer worship was evolving into its present mix of pre-taped and live-Zoom gatherings.

And then came sadness. When I went for walks and saw dogs begging to be petted; when I saw children playing in their front yards, stepping back as people walked by; when I watched the Met online gala and saw their wonderful chorus singing together, but apart; when I saw my close friends on Zoom; when I sang "with" my shape note community through a little screen. There was some joy, but often I felt sad, and sometimes I cried.

What's wrong with me? I'm privileged to live with other people, to have few money worries, to have a house filled with books, music, films and jigsaw puzzles. Why am I sad? Am I ungrateful? Why do I dread the next Zoom gathering,

and feel anxious and exhausted when it's over? Isn't it great that we have the Internet and can see each other?

Then I read two articles that helped me understand and accept my feelings.

The BBC wrote about Zoom fatigue in [The reason Zoom calls drain your energy](#). (See also [The absence of presence](#) from the blog Bodytheology.) Having to communicate with people through time-delayed screens (however fast your home internet is, there's always a lag) interferes with our ability to read body language, facial expressions, and more. As a result, we're constantly compensating, and meetings become more tiring. In addition, there's the dissonance we experience as our brains are telling us we are with people, but our bodies are saying no, they aren't there. The absence of presence.

In late April the Toronto Star published an article by Gabor Maté: [It's OK to feel sadness in these terrible times](#). I think a better headline would have been "It's vital to feel sadness..." Maté's main point is that if we allow ourselves to feel the sadness that times like this produce (and even better if we can express it to someone), then we can avoid turning that sadness into trauma: "We are traumatized only when we become more constricted... when we remain fearful or embittered after the threat has passed....The experience of genuine grief protects from trauma."

I noticed at the second Getting Connected Zoom Town Hall that fewer people were saying, "Oh, I'm fine, I have what I need," and more were saying, "This has been a hard week." I took that as a good sign. It was very tempting to try to "stay positive," especially at church gatherings, but I think it was more helpful for everyone when we allowed ourselves to grieve, and to express that grief together.

As we begin to see our society slowly opening up, we will still be struggling with fear over what this "new normal" will be. We will also still have grief. Personal grief, especially if we've lost a loved one. But also collective grief, at the lives lost, and lives irrevocably changed. It remains important that we allow the process of grief to move us from sorrow to hope.

During the Easter season we celebrate the resurrection. I suspect the resurrection stories in the Gospel are a condensed version of the emotional journey Jesus' disciples went through. Their beloved teacher, who they hoped might be the one to redeem Israel, has been ripped away from them. And with his absence they grieve, and reflect, and come to understand who he truly was, who he is. His absence becomes presence. He is with them, always.

We are the Body of Christ, and we are with each other, in grief and joy. Soon, God willing, we will be together in the flesh.





THE COMMON TABLE

Redeemer's Drop-in Community

would venture out of their encampment or rooming house. It's a high risk to leave home base, but a higher risk not to, when you are hungry.

The restaurant partnership program has kept us sustainable when food supply and donations went wonky really quickly. We now have several restaurants who have partnered with us (some helped in the first couple weeks, some are ongoing) and this is what helped us stay functioning, while honouring social distancing protocols and keeping everyone safe. The restaurants we have to thank that worked with us and our \$3/meal partnership program are: Randy's Roti (still partnering), One Restaurant in Yorkville (still partnering), Slab Burger (still partnering), CaterTO (partnered in April/May), Whatabagel (partnered in April), Zezafoun Syrian (partnered in April), and Paramount Fine Foods (partnered in April). We also are incredibly grateful for donated meal partnerships with Maple Leaf Sports Entertainment, St. Paul's Bloor Street, our next-door neighbour Starbucks, and ongoing partnership with the Toronto Drop-In Network, Second Harvest, and Daily Bread.

During our open hours each day, we are also providing washroom access (which is, sadly, a luxury these days for

Our COVID-19 Response Work at the Corner of Bloor and Avenue

Angie Hocking

Many of you have been following and encouraging our outreach work here at Redeemer. These last two months have been quite a ride! Here is an update on what we are doing at the corner these days.

We continue to be open five days a week, Monday to Friday. Our hours are 10AM to 12 noon, and we focus on getting a hot and hearty lunch out the door each day to our community. In the winter we were averaging 70 to 80 people a day, but now a typical day can have upwards of 150 people (even with the hours reduced to two per day). What does this tell us? People are hungry. No one wants to be out walking around at a time like this—only folks that absolutely need to





folks) and phone access (also a rare commodity). We have many supplies that we give out—care packages, toiletries, underwear, socks, and multi-vitamins. Our outreach staff are still doing lots of community support—touching base with many folks each day for a while out front, calling people, tracking down folks without a phone or shelter through friends, other outreach workers, or relatives. We are always checking on our people and getting creative doing it (calling a superintendent's cell phone to get to people in his building has served to be a great trick of the trade these days! Don't worry, he loves us!)

We recognize that many of our people do not have access to the internet anymore (for most, that happened at the library), so we have a daily newsletter that is handed out. On it are hellos and updates from staff, COVID-19/health news highlights, other places to find a meal each day, the weather report, and even some fun stuff (sudoku and word puzzles!). It's a way we can stay connected and keep the community cohesion going with limited access to each other. Folks get this newsletter with their meal and drink each day.

Jen on our staff team has also done great work creating a one-page resource brochure, that is being shared widely around the city by just about every street outreach and harm reduction team out there. Krista has been outstanding at offering ongoing pastoral care to some of our harder to find folks, getting them to doctor appointments and bringing them groceries. Justin has stepped right in helping coordin-

ate food needs with me in the kitchen, take in the many deliveries that come in each day, and helping with caretaking. Mark and Karen are on site often offering much front line and behind the scenes administrative support. The volunteers are incredible, as always (I might be biased here, but Redeemer has the BEST volunteers—hands down—in the city!) Volunteers are helping inside the building and outside, running the kitchen, handing out meals, and offering community support. I am proud to consider myself a team member of this incredible group of dedicated and hard-working people.

We are also at the forefront of advocacy in the city on issues surrounding homelessness and the pandemic. Pieces of our advocacy work has been featured in The Anglican, The Star, CBC, and Bloomberg Press. And we are working closely with the diocese, running the Anglican Outreach Support Network, bringing all the outreach programs in the diocese together in an effort to support, educate, and strengthen each other. Because we are stronger together.

Lastly, a huge thank you to ALL of you who continue to support this initiative. The support from the Redeemer community has been astronomical. And beyond this, we are receiving ongoing encouragement and support from ABC Residents Association, GYRA (Greater Yorkville Residents Association), the Bloor/Yorkville BIA, Bay/Bloor Rotary, and many local foundations and individuals who wish to support our work with folks on the margins at this unprecedented time.

It takes a village, y'all! Thank you for being a part of it. Please keep showing us support, love, and care... we need it, especially from you, our parishioners. This incredible work is because of your continued dedication to the most vulnerable in our midst.

If you have any questions about the work we are doing, please contact me anytime at hockinga@theredeemer.ca. ✝



How the Approval of the 2020 Budget Has Saved Us

Angie Hocking

The Redeemer budget is not usually my thing to talk about, but I can't help but think about this lately.

We all know that the budget was larger this past Vestry meeting. And that was a point of contention for many of us (which is very valid—I mean—as my grandma would say, we don't have money trees in our back yards now, do we?) And some years, it is absolutely important to cut back, to say the necessary 'no,' to keep things on the straight and narrow. In fact, much of the time, that is probably the way to go when you are working on sustaining ministry for the long haul.

But I cannot help but think that, if we didn't approve the budget we did just a few months ago—these past few months would have looked very, very different. In fact, I don't

think we would have had the capacity to be open during the COVID-19 crisis at all. I would have still been hard at work advocating, of course. But 150 meals wouldn't be going out the door each day at the corner of Bloor and Avenue. For many folks in our program, The Common Table is one of the only 'constants' in their lives—and it would have been a closed door, during some of the most uncertain and scary weeks in our shared history.

Now, many places had to choose to do this when the pandemic hit, which is a very reasonable option. And often,

For many folks in our program, The Common Table is one of the only 'constants' in their lives—and it would have been a closed door, during some of the most uncertain and scary weeks in our shared history.

it's the responsible and necessary one. I mean, it takes a lot of people, a lot of commitment, and frankly, a lot of money(!) to pull this off.

Let me tell you what happened in the second week of this crisis on the ground. Three out of three of the outreach team got a fever, which meant we would have to all be off-site for two weeks. Most volunteers made the reasonable decision to shelter in place, as they should, and so staffing is even more key than usual. A year ago, that would have been it. It would have been irresponsible (and impossible) to continue on without staffing leadership on the ground that could carry us through a precarious interim period.

But thanks to the approved budget, we had just hired our new director of parish operations, Karen Chandler and she was still feeling well. And we had just enough staffing infrastructure because Mark and Justin were there, Shaquille was in the city-funded position and Nate was available to work. Just enough staff, with the help of some extremely dedicated volunteers, to keep things afloat during those two weeks.

I remember that first morning that all outreach staff were down for the count. Karen and I were chatting, and we were worried, and I said 'Do you think we may have to close?' and she said 'I think so,' and I said 'I am afraid I think so, too.' And I literally cried when I hung up, thinking of my buddies from the program. We were likely going to have to close. But the last thing that we had said, was that Karen and I were going to just touch base the next day and see how it was going, and we would make our decision then.

We got on the phone with each other again the next morning. Things were still standing of course; the meal had been made, people had been fed. Karen, Mark, and Justin had stepped in as best they could, and they did awesome. Jean Martin and Jonas ran the delivery door, Richard spearheaded things in the kitchen. I organized things from home to make it as easy as possible for the team. We had a call the next morning. Things had gone ok again! No major crisis. Maybe we could just take it day by day, we decided. So, we all continued to work hard, and every day seemed to come and go, and the team on the ground was doing well. They willingly put aside their other tasks for those two weeks to ensure The Common Table could remain open. We just kept taking it on that way, one day at a time, until the outreach staff were able to return.

And now here we are, nine weeks into the pandemic chaos, and our COVID-19 response program is still standing. We are not only standing, but we have found our groove. Krista and Jen are on a rotating outreach schedule outside, Justin is inside in the kitchen and receiving orders, Karen is assisting where needed, Mark and Justin are keeping things

clean and up to protocol, I am working on the administrative side, coordinating outreach operations, food and partnerships, fundraising, and putting Redeemer at the forefront of advocating work in the city.

With the nature of the work we do, we needed the team to have this sort of infrastructure to be able to function during this pandemic. The team safety net had gotten us through. We couldn't have said 'let's try day by day' if those new staff weren't in the building at that time. We are all working completely to capacity, and it's *just enough* to keep things rolling. And the incredible volunteers who are filling in the gaps keep it all running right alongside us. It's still a skeleton crew at The Common Table (our drop-in networks can't believe we are pulling this off, frankly) and we will need to continue to work at creating a more sustainable infrastructure in years to come. But for now, the one we had worked.... *just barely*.

So what I think is this: the budget we just approved has saved us.

What do I mean by saved us? I am not talking about saving our jobs. Jobs come and go, and staff at Redeemer are quite employable, and could likely find another job if they need to.

What I mean is, we are saved—God's power through Christ comes unto us as salvation in relieving the groaning of creation (Rm 8:19-24)—when we make the conscious choice to be alongside the poorest during a pandemic. Salvation comes to us, when we bear witness to the suffering right on our doorstep. Salvation comes to us, when we cook meals and give out socks and underwear and make phone calls to

THE COMMON TABLE

Redeemer's Drop-in Community


our folks in shelters and subsidized housing buildings, checking in on them and bringing them what they need. Salvation comes to us, *all* of us when we support one another doing whatever role it is we play in this family-style COVID-response work at the corner of Bloor and Avenue.

I don't believe money saves us. I believe our decision to stand with the poor saves us.

It would have been ok if we had to close. It will be ok if we do this still—if we have an outbreak on our staff team, for instance, we will have to choose to close the doors for the safety of our whole community. That would be responsible and right thing to do.

But either way, we have sustained nine weeks of vital COVID-19 response work. We were open when the world was incredibly uncertain, when 90% of other programs had closed, our side door was open with hot meals at the ready. And I believe we will sustain many more weeks to come, (even if we have to get even more creative, if more limitations come our way).

And being with the poor in this and through this, has saved us.

Thank you, Redeemer community, you did this. *This* is the word made flesh. This is gospel. 

Inspire, Invite & Thank – Our Ministry Continues

When the pandemic changed how we gather, the stewardship team quickly realized that we needed to be able to offer ways for people to contribute to our vital ministries in the absence of the actual collection plate. As many communication vehicles as possible have been used to encourage

people to use electronic options, even in the short term, while also offering assurances that the mail is an option. Thank you to people who took advantage of this.

We also wanted to offer our gratitude to as many as possible for continuing to believe in the Redeemer ministry. We have had the pleasure of reaching out, mostly by personal email to several hundred members of Redeemer and the many neighbourhood supporters who don't worship with us but who value our presence in the community through the work of The Common Table.

If you are inspired by the ministry we share at Redeemer, the invitation is extended to support our community.

Donations are gratefully received online

(theredeemer.ca/donate) or by mail

(162 Bloor Street West, Toronto, ON M5S 1M4)

Church Music in the time of Covid-19

Anne Evers

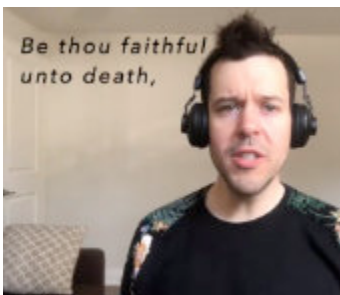
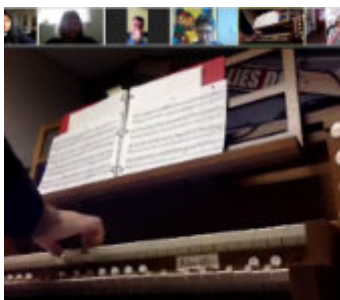


The Church of the Redeemer has long been proud of its music program: musicians who play organ, piano, guitar, violin, and more; Bach Vespers and Rock Eucharists; two choirs singing everything from Thomas Tallis to Dolly Parton; and most importantly, a congregation that sings.

Until recently, all of this glorious music involved lots of groups gathering together: choir rehearsals, band and orchestra rehearsals, and of course, church services full of people. But no longer. Now we gather by Zoom, or watch worship services streaming on Facebook. What has that meant for our music program?

You've probably noticed when we recite the Lord's Prayer together, everyone unmuted, that Zoom (or any other app for online gatherings) doesn't allow for simultaneous speaking/singing because of the lag involved. Many groups have tried to sing together at the same time online, and it's just not possible once it involves more than two locations. (When you see the Metropolitan Opera chorus and orchestra performing "together" on Zoom, be aware each one of those squares was recorded separately and then edited together.)

But our musicians are working hard to bring as much of our usual music as possible to our worship. We've all enjoyed watching Dan Norman's feet playing the organ pedals as Lorelle Angelo leads us in a hymn. (How many con-



gregations are blessed with an organist with their own home organ?) Service music and psalms are lead by singers via Zoom from their homes. For the pre-recorded services, the various recorded clips—lessons, prayers, hymns, homilies (done on phone, computer, or via Zoom)—are edited together by someone on the music team (usually Mike Daley), adding titles and transitions, and adjusting audio levels.

Virtual choir performances involve the individual choir members recording their parts at home, using a variety of programs and devices. These files are sent to Dan and Will, who then put these multiple performances into a unified choir motet.

I asked some of our musicians what is challenging about making music for Redeemer this way, and what was fulfilling. Here are their responses:

Challenges

I would say the toughest thing for collaborating on certain types of music is the loss of an elasticity in the music. The tempo has to be pretty metronomic to facilitate the layering of voices and instruments. – **Dan Norman**

Multi-device setup. – **Chris Mayell**

Not doing too many takes to try to get it "perfect." Blending when it's a virtual choir. I have to imagine my alto buddies John and

Marjan singing on either side of me and attempt to match my voice with them from memory.

Worrying more about my hair, make-up and facial expressions than when I perform live! I have no idea why I fixate on that! – **Catharin Carew**

The lag time and general instability of the platform (like our crash mid-Gloria one Sunday) definitely add a layer of anxiety to the process. When you are playing a hymn live from your home, you have no idea how it sounds to other people. When we prerecord music for the service, the sound quality when it's played back on Zoom is still not anywhere as good as the recording sounded in our homes, so that is frustrating. – **Jill and Mike Daley**

The good side:

The fun/fulfilling aspect of Zoom is that it's enabling us to keep sharing music with the Redeemer community. Without it, feeling connected as a community would be so much more challenging. There are some churches that are doing recorded services exclusively and even though those will have the best sound (Zoom was definitely not designed for music)—it's a much more passive experience for the person watching. We like that Redeemer is offering a mix and keeping people nourished with diverse types of services and music. – **Jill and Mike Daley**

Seeing the final product on Sunday. Also, seeing Dan's conducting in the YouTube videos [of backing music] makes me feel like I'm back in the choir stalls. – **Chris Mayell**

Still being able to work as a musician and learn new things about myself and my voice from performing virtually—the Joni Mitchell "Big Yellow Taxi" collaboration for Earth Day taught me so many new things about my technique. Even after two Masters of Music, the learning never stops!

The excitement and anticipation of hearing how the collaboration comes together once Dan works his computer magic!

The interaction with my fellow Redeemer musicians and the Redeemer community at large, even if virtual. As a full time musician I've realized that, even though I've lost all my concert bookings for the foreseeable future, the thing I miss



most is the camaraderie, music making and worship at Redeemer. – **Catharin Carew**

The choirs and music team are a strong community within the Redeemer community, and we are all feeling the loss of not being together. Thanks to the effort of all our musicians, we can still hear each other's voices raised in song. ✝

CATECHESIS AT REDEEMER 2020:

The program that was, was not, was, is still going strong!

Craig Spielmacher

Catechesis has always been an integral part of faith, learning and personal formation and growth at Redeemer. It is centered on discernment and personal reflection during the Lenten season while enjoying the fellowship of partnership in a group setting. The theme this year was community—a premise that is one of the central core attributes of any parish family.

On February 12, 16 people set out on a journey to explore different aspects of faith; to examine these principles and to adapt them to ways in which we live, we contribute, and we

participate in the greater community that is around us.

The catechesis program needed to continue, our participants needed social connectivity and reassurance.

Core foundations of our faith such as Who is Jesus? The Bible, The Creed and The Sacraments were discussed and pondered as the catechumens and sponsors examined their faith and strengthened their fellowship in Christ.

Topics such as the Anglican Communion, social advocacy, living your faith and working in the community

were also examined as they continued their Lenten journey and learned ways to enhance their Christian values within the community in which they live.

Catechesis 2020 was fortunate to have speakers that were experts in their fields and we are appreciative of their contributions to Catechesis this year: Sylvia Keesmaat, Nate

Wall, Professors Annette Brownlee and Joseph Mangina, the Most Rev'd. Linda Nicholls, Elin Goulden, Ann Cope, Marjorie Wrightson and Heather Bennett

To complement our theme of community this year, rotational chaplains were introduced to show support, offer encouragement, give knowledge and provide advice to all participants. We offer gratitude to Steven Mackinson, Susan Haig, Roshni Jayawardena, Ann Cope, Susan Graham Walker, Paul Walker and Angie Hocking.

Then COVID-19...

Over the course of three days—Friday, March 13 to Sunday, March 15, social gathering policies were introduced, rescinded, reintroduced and expanded. One set of plans to continue catechesis was formed, then over the course of hours was cancelled and we were back to the drawing board.

The catechesis program needed to continue, our participants needed social connectivity and reassurance. Working together with Roshni and Ann...ZOOM, we were relaunched.

Our first on-line class centered on the Anglican Communion and was led by the Primate of Canada, Archbishop Linda Nichols. A total of 39 people participated in this session as we invited the young adults group to join in. We are grateful to the Primate for being so understanding and hospitable. The Zoom recording was by shared with many in our community.

We continued to meet online for the remainder of our sessions sharing our faith journey with each other. Along with our catechesis instruction, we followed the Redeemer online presence to complement our learning. But we were missing something. There was a void—the void of human connection and the bond that was forming when we met in person. A second night called Virtual Connection was started on Tuesdays where we dissected scripture, examined poetry and lyrics and studied the various ministries at Church of the Redeemer. Topics that are being explored are mirrored in our new reality—isolation, teamwork and hope are some examples.

Our strategic plan states ‘We are a community of disciples of Jesus Christ striving to live out our commitment to him. We acknowledge that Jesus has neither hands nor feet to work in the world except our own.’ Listening to this adopted statement, we are doing our part to be able to contribute to our community when we once again can assemble as a community. ✝

1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.





Paul Pynkoski

Theologian John Shea once suggested that we have been carrying the Jesus stories around in our back pockets for so long that our imaginations have ceased to be captured by their strangeness and power. I am certainly willing to admit to this, particularly of the resurrection stories—so many hearings made me hit the point where my response became “Yeah, I know that one,” and I did little more than skim the text or give partial attention to the words proclaimed.

The ground shifted this year and the resurrection stories have begun to speak to me anew. (Thanks, Learning@Redeemer for creative Lent and Easter projects). The starting point was John’s story of Jesus showing up after the doors have been locked. It continued with Luke’s story of the round trip from Jerusalem to Emmaus and back. Jesus shows up, but no one recognizes him. The empty tomb is not cause for joy in either account. Recognition and joy come to the gathered disciples with the revelation of Christ’s wounds.

John’s account identifies Mary Magdalen as the first to discover that the tomb is empty. She reports, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.” Peter and John follow her and actually enter the tomb. They exit without Mary, leaving her behind, perplexed and in sorrow.

In Luke’s account, the empty tomb is a cause of anxiety for the women who made the journey. They “did not find the body...they were perplexed.” They are dismissed when they tell the male disciples that an angel has told them about resurrection. Luke emphasizes this further when Cleopas and his companion, sorrowing and perhaps depressed, meet a stranger on the road to Emmaus. They relate what the women were told, but end, we “did not see him.”

If the empty tomb is a source of sorrow, perplexity, and depression, then it is hardly “proof” of the resurrection. How, then, do the disciples encounter the risen Christ?

When the disciples gather behind locked doors, the resurrection invades their consciousness in an encounter with a stranger. His sudden appearance in both Luke 24 and John 20

is unsettling. He speaks “Peace,” but that is not enough. John mentions the stranger’s wounds three times, but what particularly caught my attention was, “...he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced.” You find the same sequence in Luke: joy follows revelation of the wounds.

In other accounts, Jesus is recognized on speaking Mary’s name, or following a trip to Emmaus, when he blesses and breaks bread.

None of the events are spectacular in and of themselves: a visit to a grave site, taking a walk, fearful people in hiding, sharing a meal. The stranger is revealed as the Christ in the most mundane of circumstances. The physicality of it all, the sensuousness of the encounters, is undeniable.

Contemplative writers have witnessed to this for centuries. St. Benedict wrote, “All guests who present themselves are to be welcomed as Christ...By a bow of the head or by a complete prostration of the body, Christ is to be adored and welcomed in them.” Commenting on this, Joan Chittister offers, “The message to the stranger is clear: come right in and disturb our perfect lives. You are the Christ for us today.”

Thomas Merton is equally emphatic. He wrote of his time in the slums, that in “Harlem...are the stables where Christ is born among the outcast and the poor. And where he is, we must also be. I know He is in Harlem, no doubt, and would gladly live where he is and serve Him there.”

That presses to memory Matthew’s story of the last judgment, where both the righteous and the unrighteous encountered Christ unknowingly in the wounded: poor, prisoners, the hungry, and those needing clothes. Such encounters occur almost daily at The Common Table. A crack user with a brain injury often speaks to me about how God’s presence is experienced in his life; a person who lived under a bridge gave me a gift to commemorate the birth of my grandson; the insights of book club members have opened new ways for me to read fiction. Generosity, kindness, persistence, and compassion are shown in the lives of those whose lives are marked by wounds of addiction, poverty, loneliness, and abuse.

These stories urge us to pay attention to *our* lives. The joy of the recognition of the wounded, risen Lord is present always, awaiting our discovery in every human encounter. ✝

The stranger is revealed as the Christ in the most mundane of circumstances. The physicality of it all, the sensuousness of the encounters, is undeniable.

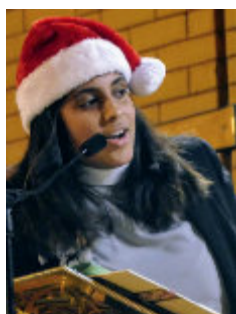
The Reverend Roshni Jayawardena



Our assistant curate, **Roshni Jayawardena** will be concluding her curacy with us on June 19. She will become the Incumbent at Trinity-St Paul, Port Credit on July 1. We will have an opportunity to say goodbye to her virtually on June 14. When we are able to gather again in person, we will invite Roshni back for a party to celebrate our time together.



Hilary Keachie will be assuming responsibility for children and family ministry alongside youth ministry. Nate Wall will support the ministry to young adults that Hilary had been leading.



Saying Adieu to the Redeemer Community

Roshni Jayawardena

The first time I stepped foot inside the Church of the Redeemer was for a Sunday morning service in June 2017. There was some kind of race blocking what seemed like all of the roads of the city as I drove in and I was late for the service. I eventually stumbled through the front doors (literally, I tripped on myself!) very late, and I was ready to embarrassingly apologize to the greeters in whispers. Although, no apologies were needed. The greeters welcomed me smiling and didn't seem to feel nearly as panicked as I did. It was a much-needed calmness to what was a tiresome morning, and I was grateful.

Almost three years later, I continue to be grateful for you, the people of the Church of the Redeemer, a place and people that have kept me grounded, inspired and strengthened no matter what else was happening around us. My curacy has been anything but predictable. There have been moments of great heartache, surprise, joy, and still moments where I have stumbled (metaphorically, but still sometimes literally!). However, through all the changes I have come to the end of these three years with my goal accomplished: I know the type of priest I want to be, and I have learned it from being around all of you.

During my time at the Redeemer I have learned to listen, pray, lead, be creative, and to trust in myself and the gifts God has given me. My time at the Redeemer has taught me about the strong community that you are, and that gives me hope for the wider Church that we will always be a part of together. You are all powerhouses in your own right, and I am thankful to have been a part of your faithful witness within and beyond our walls. You have all upheld and inspired me in so many ways, and I am a better and more faithful person because of who you are as individuals and

as a community. Thank you for welcoming me, teaching me, and preparing me for all that is going to come ahead.

The staff team at Redeemer is remarkable. You already know this, many even assume this, but I am so thankful for my experience of the strong team that you have. This group that is so talented, down to earth, and truly working every day to care for our community and beyond. They have taught me, and I am truly in awe to know all of them and to have done ministry alongside them.

The Redeemer Kids ministry has been such a significant part of my time at the Redeemer. Speaking directly to the adults of the Redeemer, you are blessed to have these children as part of your community. The Redeemer Kids are a faithful and mighty part of the larger Redeemer community. I hope you all continue to get to know the children among you, learn about one another and continue walking together in faith (and have fun doing it!).



Now speaking directly to the Redeemer Kids, you are blessed to have so many fantastic teens and adults as part of your community. They enjoy seeing you grow and learn and bounce in those bouncy castles. They will be there to support you as you ask questions and learn about your faith and who you are. I know this from experience. Cherish them, their wisdom and mighty works. I hope you all continue to get to know and support the teens and adults among you, learn about one another and continue walking together in faith (and have fun doing it).

This next step in my ministry comes at a strange time in our world. I am sad to be saying goodbye but hope you know that The Church of the Redeemer will inspire me in all that I do. Thank you for everything and know that you have all been more than I could have asked for or imagined. ✝

Faith Leaders Call on the Mayor and City to Uphold Duty of Care for the Homeless

Faith Leaders in Toronto, including our leadership staff at Redeemer, sent this letter to Mayor John Tory in early May and held a press conference to launch their letter. It articulates the strain being put on churches doing outreach during this time and calls on the city to uphold their duty of caring for the homeless during the pandemic.

[Download Letter](#)

His Worship, John Tory
Mayor of Toronto
City Hall, 2nd Floor, 100 Queen St. W.
Toronto ON M5H 2N2

May 6, 2020

Dear Mr. Tory,

Since the beginning of the pandemic, churches in Toronto's Downtown East have stepped up to provide the basic necessities of life for homeless people. We are handing out meals, toiletries, and when available, sanitizer and masks. Our staff, clergy, and laity, who are not health care professionals, politicians or city-operated have been making do, trying to minimize contact while meeting people's most basic needs.

We are doing this dangerous work because like generations of Christians before us, we believe it is our mandate that compels us to protect life. **But we are also doing it because the City of Toronto has failed in its mandate to ensure accessible basic health needs and safe housing accommodations for the poorest people and to ensure the overall safety of all Torontonians.** These two failures have met in our response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

More than a month ago we heard Councillor Joe Cressy announce that the City of Toronto was pursuing the acquisition of hotels and vacant residential buildings to provide safe shelter for people experiencing homelessness, accessible hand washing stations with portable toilets and we were most encouraged. We imagined that there would be a swift and positive impact on the people who are using our outreach programs. Once inside their own rooms, people could shelter in place and reduce their risk of becoming infected or infecting others, and churches in Toronto's Downtown East could return to a role improving the quality of life for the most vulnerable neighbours. No longer would we be making and handing out as many as 200 meals a day at every open location. No longer would we be begged for tents and sleeping bags so that people could stay in the ravines, alleys or city sidewalks rather than in unsafe accommodations of shelters.

Since Councillor Cressy's announcement, the lines of people appearing to pick up a meal and other necessities at our churches every day have grown much longer. We are aware of very few people who have been moved into these promised hotel rooms or heard of safe accommodations in the shelter system. **Our volunteers and staff are overwhelmed. We cannot indefinitely shoulder the burden of the City's slow and seemingly reluctant pace.** The virus demands constant vigilance and adequate public health measures. Our resources are not infinite, and our people are beginning to weary. There are significant risks inherent in continuing to operate at such high volumes with our volunteers, staff, and laity.

As we told you last month, downtown churches have supported the call to immediately open hotel rooms and swiftly find permanent housing for those experiencing homelessness. The increasing incidence of COVID-19 in the shelter system indicates that our call for action was well-founded. As cities throughout the world have found, we cannot end this virus until we isolate, test and treat people in congregate living settings that are currently without social distancing and hand washing protocols. If we are to be COVID free, everyone will need a room with a door and a bathroom. **Overstretched churches cannot provide this. The City can.**

We need your help not only to end the massive provision of necessities by volunteers working in dangerous conditions, but to help make these programs as safe as possible in the meantime. We need on-site testing, public health guidance and support, and a steady and adequate supply of PPE for our volunteers and staff.

But the people lining up for necessities need more. They need rooms with bathroom and shower access. They need laundry facilities. They need money to buy food. Until they can obey the order to shelter in place, they will always be at risk.

We are notably concerned about the vulnerability of Indigenous people at this time. As Sandra Campbell of Toronto Urban Native Ministry puts it, *"Presently the shelter system is unsafe, overpopulated, and systematically institutionalized, there is no realistic accessible place for Indigenous street folks and the vulnerable community to wash their hands, take showers, safely defecate, especially at times when everything is closed. Furthermore, some of the vulnerable community members have tried to reach outside the faith communities for extra help. However, they have experienced either being harassed, ticketed, or arrested with handcuffs."*

The City cannot take for granted the goodwill of Toronto's Downtown East churches and their volunteers. They have stepped up in the initial emergency pandemic. They cannot maintain this pace indefinitely. The City must mobilize significant resources to improve the living conditions of homeless people in order to end this pandemic.

We continue to help meet the needs of vulnerable Torontonians, and we continue to welcome opportunities to work with City Council and staff in serving those in greatest need. We ask that you act swiftly in the basic health needs and house the vulnerable and thereby reduce the transmission of the virus.

Yours faithfully,

Alan Beattie, Sanctuary Ministries
Kathy Biasi, St. James Cathedral

The Rev. Karen J. Bowles, Metropolitan United Church

Sandra Campbell, Toronto Urban Native Ministry

Megan Carver, Metropolitan United Church

Stephanie Cunti, Metropolitan United Church

The Rev'd Dr. Alison Falby, All Saints Church-Community Centre

Zachary Grant, Church of the Holy Trinity

The Rev'd Dr. Walter Hamann, St. Bartholomew, Regent Park

The Rev. Sherman Hesselgrave, Church of the Holy Trinity

Ric Hillyer, Toronto Urban Native Ministry

Angie Hocking, Church of the Redeemer

The Rev. James Houston, Church of the Holy Trinity

The Rev. Roshni Jayawardena, The Church of the Redeemer

The Rev. Jim Keenan, Saint Luke's United Church

The Rev. Leigh Kern, Toronto Urban Native Ministry

The Rev. Canon Steven Mackison, The Church of the Redeemer

The Rev. Jason Francis Meyers, Metropolitan United Church

Keith Num, Churchwarden, Church of the Holy Trinity

The Rev. Walter Ridley co-chair of Peace and Social Justice, Metropolitan United Church

The Rev. Evan      Smith-Toronto Urban Native Ministry

The Very Rev. Stephen Vail, Dean of Toronto and Rector of St. James Cathedral

The Rev. Canon Andrew Wesley, Church of the Redeemer/Council Fire Native Cultural Centre

Supported by:

Rafi Aaron, Spokesperson, The Interfaith Coalition to Fight Homelessness

Bishop Jenny Andison, Anglican Diocese of Toronto

Rabbi Rena Arashinoff - Baycrest

Bishop Andrew Asbil, Anglican Diocese of Toronto

The Vm. Kyn Barker, Anglican Diocese of Toronto

The Rev'd Canon Joyce Barnett, St. Matthias, Bellwoods

The Rev'd Daniel Benson, St. Paul's United Church, Scarborough

Rev. Dr. Elaine Boone, Advent Lutheran Church, Toronto

The Rev. Julie Burn, Resurrection, East Toronto

Rev. Rasma Cause, Epiphany ev. Lutheran Church, Scarborough

The Rev. Angela J. Clumey, Fallingbrook Presbyterian Church, Scarborough

Tina Condon, Davenport Perth Community Ministry

Kimberly Curry, Seeds of Hope Foundation

The Rev. Gregory Daly, Birchcliff Bluffs United Church, Toronto

Rev. Wes Denyer, Rosedale Presbyterian Church

The Rev. Maggie Dieter, The United Church of Canada, Toronto Urban Native Ministry Board Member

The Rev. Douglas duCharme, Fairlaw Avenue United Church

Rabbi Edward Elkin, First Nazarene Congregation

The Rev'd Molly Finlay, Christ Church Deer Park

Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl - Emeritus, Beth Tzedek Congregation

The Rev. Jun Gao, St. Paul Chinese, Markham

The Most Rev. Mark MacDonald, National Indigenous Anglican Archbishop, Toronto

The Rev'd Tom MacNeil, Toronto Chinese United Church

Betty Maharaj, The General Synod of The Anglican Church of Canada

Martha Martin, Kingston Road United Church

Sheilagh McGlynn, Animator for Youth Ministries, The Anglican Church of Canada

Diane Meredith Conscientious Christian concerned for all my relations

The Rev. Stephen Milton, Lawrence Park Community Church, Toronto

The Rev. Christine Morrow, Assistant to the Bishop, Eastern Synod, ELCC

The Rev'd W. Tay Moss, The Church of The Messiah

Inam Muneeb Nasir, Co-Chair - National Muslim Christian Liaison Committee

The Rev'd Richard Newland, St. Dunstan of Canterbury Anglican Church

The Most Rev. Linda Nicholls, Primate, Anglican Church of Canada

The Rev. Maria Nightingale, Associate Priest, St. Peter's, Etobicoke

The Rev. Don Parsons, Eglinton St. George's United Church

The Rev. Dr. Kristin Philpott, Rosedale United Church

Rabbi Irit Printz, Bnai Shalom v'Tikvah synagogue

Bishop Michael Pryse, Eastern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

The Rev'd Dr. David Reed, Wycliffe College, Toronto

The Rev. Canon Lucy Reid, St Aidan in the Beach

Toronto

Rabbi Dr. Geoffrey Haber, Director - Department of Spiritual Care, Baycrest

Mim Harder, All My Relations

Peter Haresnape, Pastor, Toronto United Mennonite Church

Scott Hilborn, Manager of Human Resources, The General Synod of The Anglican Church of Canada

The Rev. Steve Hoffer, Redeemer Lutheran

The Rev. Roberta Howey, Rosedale United Church

The Rev. Dr. Paul Hutchison, Eglinton St. George's United Church

The Rev. Karen Isaacs, St Paul's Bloor Street

The Rev'd Dr. Alison Kemper, St. Matthias, Bellwoods

The Rev. Pamela Korman, St. Ansgar Lutheran

The Rev. Dr. Martha ter Kuile, Bloor Street United Church

Lois Kunkel, Ed.D., Registered Psychotherapist, Hampton Therapy Centre

Dr. Barbara Landau and Shahid Akhtar, Co-Chairs, Canadian Association of Jews and Muslims

Rev. Peter Lisinski Thornhill Lutheran Church

University of Toronto

United Church of Canada

United Church of Canada

United Church of Canada

United Church of Canada

United Church of Canada

United Church of Canada

United Church of Canada

United Church of Canada

United Church of Canada

United Church of Canada

United Church of Canada

United Church of Canada

United Church of Canada

United Church of Canada

United Church of Canada

United Church of Canada

United Church of Canada

United Church of Canada

United Church of Canada

United Church of Canada

United Church of Canada

United Church of Canada

United Church of Canada

United Church of Canada

United Church of Canada

United Church of Canada

Pastoral Visiting in the Time of COVID-19

Susan Haig

When Joni Mitchell penned Big Yellow Taxi, she was expressing an important truth of the human psyche: “Don’t it always seem to go, that you don’t know what you’ve got till it’s gone.”

Absolutely right Joni. So much of what we had is gone, taken without warning or a by-your-leave. And here we are shaking our heads, realizing how very much we have taken for granted, and yearning for these formerly—unappreciated aspects of our normal to come back. Soon!

It was minutes after our Sunday Zoom service on the 2nd of COVID-19. Although I had enjoyed our worship together and felt a sense of peace and well-being, my spirits then nose-dived as I became aware of how much I missed our beautiful worship space. More than that, how much I longed to behold your beautiful faces. I felt myself missing the way a certain person tilts their head. Missing the way another laughs at the funny bits of a homily. Missing another’s signature way of dressing. Missing the heavenly music of our choirs; missing all our voices raised in song. Missing the bread nestled in my hands, the wine wetting my lips. Missing the joy of passing the peace, the warmth of hugs at the door. Missing the quiet intimate moments of conversation and sharing of stories.

As I let this grief sweep over me and the tears sting my cheeks, my mind associated to two images. First, in my mind’s eye, I saw my great grandfather, the Rev’d Lewis Warner Hill, a Methodist preacher in Toronto in the 1890s and early decades of the 20th century. I imagined him all alone working in his study in the mornings preparing the Sunday sermon; and then, joyfully sprung from his solitude, bicycling along the busy afternoon streets of the city, making his way from home to home caring for his flock. Then, almost immediately, a second image rose up: I saw another more well-known clergyperson, this time a Roman Catholic priest, riding his bicycle along bucolic Cotswold lanes, attired in cassock and black hat, caring for his flock whilst assisting the local and often clueless constabulary.

Simple as that: the genesis of my current mode of pastoral visiting. Several times a week since Holy Week, I’ve taken to the streets of Toronto on the fairer days, wearing



my clericals and a fabulous black hat, a cappello romano, on loan from a prescient parishioner who bought it years ago but didn’t know why or what for. I cycle from home to home, stopping at a very safe distance to say hello, chat, and offer a blessing or prayer. It’s fun when someone comes to the door and says to their partner, “hey, here’s Father Brown!” It’s profound when, as happens more often, someone exclaims, “I can’t believe you’re here! It’s so awesome to actually see you!”

One of the simplest things in the world is now one of the most important. While our pastoral ministry is now primarily conducted by telephone and the internet, (and thank God for those means of connection), one of the most potent means of pastoral care we can provide during this season of isolation is a small measure of our embodied presence.

The risen Christ came to his anxious, grieving, and isolated friends on those first days and weeks of their earth-shaking crisis and showed himself to them. He showed himself to them in his risen physicality and he said, “peace be with you.” Nothing could have been more powerfully right.



It's been during this Eastertide of 2020, during this time of COVID-19, that I have come to a fuller, deeper appreciation of the significance of the risen Christ's physical appearances to his friends. No, not just the importance. The necessity. Christ comes to his friends in order to repair the trauma inflicted by his arrest and execution. He comes to reconcile with them and restore their broken relationships. And he comes to empower them to continue God's mission in the world. Perhaps some of that could have been achieved through a letter, a vision or dream, a voice from heaven. But it could be most perfectly accomplished through his physical appearing to them, complete with the timbre of his voice, the familiarity of his touch, the signature tilt of his head as he laughed, his unique way of tying the belt around his tunic. This is what his friends then needed. This is what his friends now need.

Father Brown continues her rounds and hopes to see you all in good time. If you know of anyone who needs a visit urgently, please be in touch by email or phone the Church office and leave a voicemail. Meanwhile, may God's peace be with you! ✝



Redeemer Kids

ZOOMING INTO CHURCH SCHOOL:

A Redeemer Kids Update

Roshni Jayawardena

In the midst of all the changes at home, at school, and in so many other parts of life the Redeemer Kids continue to gather to share, laugh, and explore faith together. Below are some ways Redeemer Kids and families have continued to connect and actively participate in the life of our parish.

Caring for our community: Card Making and 'A Big Picture' Drawing Contest

Working with the pastoral care team, Redeemer Kids created beautiful cards for members of the parish. Leading up



to Easter, 35 cards were made and mailed to parishioners to brighten their day and stay connected. Additionally, some of our Redeemer Kids were also able to participate in 'A Big Picture' drawing contest; creating inspiring art of hope while working to support the Common Table.

Holy Week

Holy week started with multiple virtual parades together with instruments, special parade attire and waving palm

leaves that families had crafted at home. Shortly after Palm Sunday, families received activity packages created by Rev. Roshni and Hilary to help families engage in Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and The Easter Vigil within their homes: Activities included home foot washing instructions, a stations of the cross with pictures from a variety of graphic novel sources, ways to explore baptism and more.

Easter Sunday

On Easter Sunday during our online service, we hope you saw the creative way Redeemer Kids proclaimed the gospel through [a video of their own illustrations and narrations](#). This was an inspiring way to have Redeemer Kids continue to tell our Easter Story as they have done in previous years and a wonderful way to start our worship. The creativity, time and talents of all involved are very much appreciated.

Zooming Into Church School

Since March 22, Redeemer Kids, families and church school teachers have been 'Zooming Into Church School' Sundays at 9.30AM. Our time together on Zoom consists of check in and sharing, church school lessons and we conclude each gathering by singing the Lord's Prayer (even though we may not always be in synch we sing loudly, proudly, and faithfully!). Following each Zoom session, families are invited to complete an activity package that builds on the lesson each week as a time of family faith formation and fun.

We continue to learn about a variety of topics together, but most recently our church school teachers spent five weeks leading an exploration of different female heroes in the bible. As we continue, we are so grateful to have our teachers, musicians and guest speakers from the Redeemer community joining us on Zoom.

A Call for teachers

As per our previous *Gathering* article we need four more teachers to complete our team starting in September. Although we are in a unique time of ministry right now, I urge the community to continue to look ahead to ensure the sustainability of the children's ministry at Redeemer and how you can be a part of it. If you have any questions or would like to learn more about helping with children's ministry, please contact me (roshni@theredeemer.ca)

Thank you to church school leaders and teachers who continue to plan, prepare engaging and fun lessons, and check in on the Redeemer Kids. Thank you also to Redeemer

Kids and families who continue to creatively participate in church school when we know you are balancing so much in this strange time. Although we are not all gathered together in person Redeemer Kids continues to be a vital ministry at Redeemer and we are thankful to be still learning and journeying together.



To Be Rich in Good Works, Generous, Ready to Share: A Reflection

As for those who in the present age are rich, command them not to be haughty, or to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but rather on God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share, thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life that really is life. 1 Timothy 6: 17-21

At our annual Vestry meeting in February, we looked back at the breadth and depth of ministry offered and our 2019 financial picture. We looked with anticipation toward the ambitious plans for 2020. We might have said of ourselves we were ready “to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, ready to share.” We did not know how much we would need to set our hopes on God and to take hold of the life that really is life.

In March, novel coronavirus (COVID-19) entered our lives. Early on, the closure of our building and not gathering for worship, church school, dozens of weekly meetings and the Common Table seemed unthinkable! Quietly, prayerfully, steadily, new ways of being Church began to unfold. Led by our steadfast and creative clergy, staff and ministry area leads and volunteers, priorities were identified, and problems solved. How to offer worship? How to keep the Common Table going? Who is struggling with isolation or needs practical help? How might we do our usual programming? How can we connect and enjoy being together in some way? How do we pay the salaries of clergy, staff and pay our bills?

In the third month of living in new ways, and being Church in new ways, “to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share” we relish gathering for morning, evening and mid-week worship services offered through Zoom or recorded and posted on the website. The Common Table continues to offer a street café at the ramp door, five days a week, serving meals to about 150 people each day and to offer community to those who are marginalized. Our virtual church school and youth group are flourishing. The pastoral care team has doubled in size and members check-in with those who want a regular call. Zoom facilitated gatherings for Marginalia, and young adults attract participants keen for

fellowship. Learning@Redeemer, Creation Matters and ISWG continue to offer enriching programming.

Throughout this time, parishioners have provided faithful prayerful, practical and financial support to **be** Church in all these ways. Individuals have continued to give or increase their giving through pre-authorized giving (PAR), or to give in new ways such as through CanadaHelps. And, many people beyond the parish have contributed financially as well as through partnerships to keep the Common Table going, recognizing that this ministry is vital to the wider community. We are so very grateful for the prayers, expressions of encouragement, generous sharing of time, talent and financial gifts enabling our many ministries to thrive in this time of uncertainty, this time of trial.

As we look ahead, we have begun to realize there is no going back to the way things were, for a very long time. We may have hoped that the lockdown of the city due to COVID-19 would be short-lived and from which there would be a complete recovery. As the weeks have become months, the ongoing threat of infection, the requirement for physical distancing, and the prohibition of gathering in groups of more than five, mean we will be unable to gather indoors for worship for the foreseeable future. These are heartbreaking realizations. These realities led to the parish's Executive Team making very difficult decisions with respect to our staff in late May. We grieve the losses we are experiencing through the ending of relationships that were vital to our ministry as it was. We grieve the loss of being together in, and sharing, our beautiful spirit-filled building. We grieve the loss of receiving Holy Communion together and the delay of holding Celebrations of Life for Wilma, Terry and Janet, members of the parish who have died.

At the upcoming financial mid-year review to be held on June 21, to which all are encouraged to attend, we will prayerfully consider our financial picture and seek the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share. Despite, or maybe because of, the realities that confront us, we confidently seek to take hold of the life that really is life.

With gratitude

Stewardship Team:

Heather Bennett, Susan Graham Walker, David Pabke

*Led by our steadfast
and creative clergy,
staff and ministry
area leads and
volunteers,
priorities were
identified, and
problems solved.*

The World of Youth and Young Adults at Redeemer

Their buds are almost always the same: I'm looking forward to this being over, to going back to school, to seeing my friends, to going outside. Every week, we start youth group with a Rose, Thorn, Bud and Helping Vine (or some combination there of). It's a chance to check in, to share, to reflect about the good as well as the more challenging parts of our week. It's something we started doing way before the coronavirus changed our whole realities, but it seems particularly important these days, and has become an integral part of our youth group time. Since March 22, the Redeemer youth have been meeting on Zoom every Sunday morning. We've changed the time, to allow for some extra sleeping in, and now meet at 11.30AM.

We spent the Lenten season focussing on prayer. We talked through our questions, explored prayer practices in various faith traditions and started a prayer chain in which we each drew names and prayed for a different member of youth every week. After Easter, following a suggestion from some youth members, we started exploring Biblical Cataclysms. We've read, watched, wondered and talked about some pretty challenging parts of the Bible so far, including the great flood and the plagues. It's intense! At the time I'm writing this, up next is the Book of Daniel—beasts, visions



and a fiery furnace and then on to Revelation which picks up many images and ideas from both the plagues and Daniel.

We are preparing for Youth Ministry Sunday on Pentecost in which the youth group will plan and lead much of our Sunday worship service. This year will obviously look quite different, but we are figuring out ways to make the service creative and meaningful, and to reflect the vision of our youth. Stay tuned!

We also recently heard the news that unfortunately the CLAY (Canadian Lutheran Anglican Youth) gathering has been postponed for a year. We were really looking forward to our youth trip to Calgary this summer, and although not unexpected, it is very disappointing. We hope to be able to go next August.

Our 20s and 30s group also continues to meet online via Zoom. We started doing “virtual brunch” which is definitely not as delicious as going out to a restaurant, but meaningful none the less. We even sometimes bring our own food to the screen and share what we've been cooking. We started by following our once a month schedule, but after Easter have moved to meeting every other week as a way to stay connected and grounded. Members of this group also helped lead the first recorded Rock Eucharist by recording readings and the prayers of the people.

Sadly, we had to cancel our pilgrimage to Taizé, in France which was planned for May 15 to 24. The decision was really out of our hands, but difficult nonetheless as we had spent nearly a year preparing and getting excited about this opportunity. We have talked about potentially trying to go next year. We will see what the future has in store.

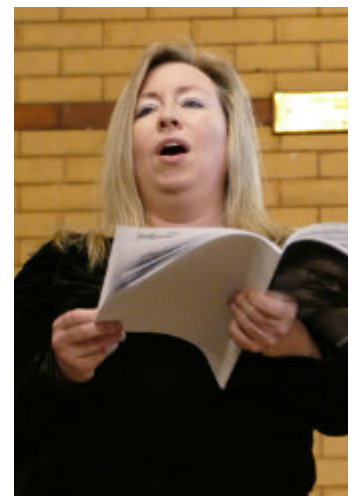
Just like the youth, I long for this to be over and to see you all in person again, but in the meantime, I'm so grateful for the opportunities to connect, to share and be in community, even while apart.

Yours ever,
Hilary





On Saturday, March 7 we gathered to remember and give thanks for the life and ministry of **John Campbell**. It was a gathering where, through word, song, prayer, reflection and the breaking of bread colleagues past and present, friends, parishioners and family celebrated well all the ways John shaped our ministries, our communities, and our lives. John taught us to sing a new song unto the Lord, he took us down unexpected paths when he 'changed his mind' in the middle of the liturgy and we are the richer for it. We were blessed by the many years he led our community from in the midst of us.





Refugee Settlement in the Time of a Pandemic

Susanna Jacob

In the past few months, we have become painfully aware of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on those of us living comfortably in the countries of the West. And there is now a heightened awareness of the economic and health inequities within the developed world, including Canada, Ontario, and our own city.

Looking to the developing world, we see countries where medical care is totally inadequate, where physical distancing is impossible, and where sharp distinctions between the haves and have-nots leave millions more at risk. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the plight of the 71 million forcibly displaced people in the world today.

Whether living precariously in countries such as Turkey and Lebanon, or confined to refugee camps in Bangladesh

or Kenya, those fleeing wars, persecution and violence in their countries of origin are under even more severe threat to their health and life than the rest of us. Lack of sanitation, adequate food and water, and access to medical care have left already vulnerable populations even more at risk to infection from the virus. Massive overcrowding in refugee camps means that an outbreak would spread rapidly with devastating effects. The UNHCR has urged Greece to “evacuate” overcrowded refugee camps. Where the asylum seekers could go is open to question in

a Europe already suffering from COVID-19, economic issues, and xenophobia.

Wealthy countries need to step up, both because it is the humanitarian thing to do, and out of self-interest. All countries are suffering the economic impact of COVID-19, but those in the developed world still have more resources than countries bearing the brunt of the refugee crisis. Some of the largest refugee camps are in countries (Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sudan, Kenya) already facing enormous challenges in providing safety and security before the pandemic. Allowing COVID-19 to spread within these camps would create the potential for further instability and turmoil in those countries, as well as increasing the possibility of the virus spreading there. Both these scenarios would be likely to result in international impacts. As Bob Rae pointed out, in *The Globe & Mail*, “The single worst thing we could do is to cut back on the necessary supports for refugees globally.”

Canada, along with UNHCR, has “temporarily pause(d) our refugee resettlement programs impacted by the travel restrictions,” and will “resume resettling refugees as conditions permit,” according to the Government of Canada website. When “conditions permit,” people in dire circumstances worldwide will need settlement support. Canada will need to act.

As we know, immigrants contribute enormously to Canada’s culture, and, to our economy, and as we are discovering during the pandemic, are the backbone of essential services. We rely on them as health care workers, cleaners, factory workers, cab drivers, and meat packers. The effect of COVID-19 on these workers is magnified; not only must they labour as essential workers, but if they are laid off or contract the virus and must stay at home, they cannot send remittances back to families in their countries of origin, contributing to suffering and poverty in their homelands and potentially increasing the flow of refugees.

“Think globally, act locally” has long been the admonition to those who are trying to make a difference in the world. We at Redeemer have been doing that as part of our ministry since 1987, when a family from El Salvador was sponsored. Over the past five years, we have again stepped up to welcome and settle refugees from around the world. The first of these, Ibrahim, from The Gambia, now lives in Ottawa. The second, a Karen family originally from Burma (Myanmar), lived in a refugee camp in Thailand for many years. After the start that Redeemer gave them in Canada, they have recently moved to a house where the extended family of 12 can live together nearer to their Karen Baptist Church. The most recent newcomers, four young men from Eritrea, were also given new beginnings through Redeemer’s generosity. Before the pandemic, they were all

Wealthy countries need to step up, both because it is the humanitarian thing to do, and out of self-interest.

working at least part time, and looking forward to finding full-time employment. While Taha and Abdu are here in Toronto, where their work situations as newcomers are now threatened, Ibrahim and Omer returned to Africa for their weddings in March. They will not be able to return to Canada, where they are permanent residents, until travel is safely resumed.

Globally there are millions of displaced people; locally we have provided a welcome and home to some of those suffering from the ravages of war, violence, and persecution. It is the humanitarian, compassionate thing to do, and contributes to the well-being of Canada's future. We have no idea how long the pandemic will last, nor when "conditions (will) permit" the resumption of refugee settlement, but Church of the Redeemer has stepped up before, and is very likely to do

so again. When Canada begins processing refugee sponsorship applications again, the refugee settlement committee will ask for the support for which the Redeemer community is known. It will be a fitting expression of our regained freedom to share that freedom with new Canadians, and to provide stability and a new home to those who have survived so much uncertainty and so many threats to their health, safety, and lives.

In the meantime, if you want to do something tangible, there is an action/letter on the issue of refugee settlement that you may want to consider signing from Amnesty (in the past we've done letter-writing in response to the situations they highlight).

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/get-involved/take-action/greece-refugees-coronavirus-covid-19/>

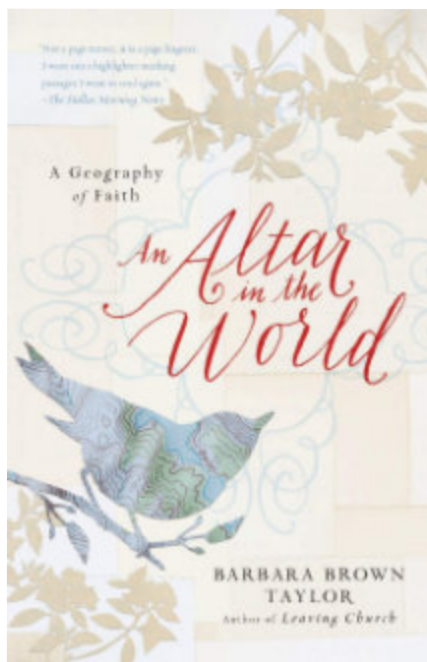


LEARNING AT REDEEMER SUMMER READING GROUPS:

An Altar in the World by Barbara Brown Taylor

For most of us, our lives have become smaller during this pandemic. We interact with fewer people, we cover less ground, we are surrounded day in and day out with the same views. But our lives have not become any less sacred. The limitations of the pandemic, while undesirable in and of themselves, provide an opportunity for us to see our everyday surroundings and experiences in a new light, as manifestations of a God that is not confined to church buildings or theological language. In *An Altar in the World*, Barbara Brown Taylor guides us into deeper engagement with the sacred everyday.

"What is saving my life right now is the conviction that there is no spiritual treasure to be found apart from the bodily experiences of human life on earth. My life depends on engaging the most ordinary physical activities with the most exquisite attention I can give them. My life depends on ignoring all touted distinctions between the secular and the sacred, the physical and the spiritual, the body and the soul."



Barbara Brown Taylor, *An Altar on the World*.

Learning at Redeemer will be hosting reading groups this summer to discuss this book. Summer reading groups are not only a way to investigate and expand your faith, they are also a great way to connect with others in the parish. We'd love to have you join us.

The kick-off event will be on Thursday, June 25 from 7 to 8PM with reading groups beginning the second week of July. We have ordered copies of the book from Tyndale for \$20 and will arrange delivery to your home once they arrive. Please email amber.aulen@mail.utoronto.ca or david.townsend@utoronto.ca to request a copy of the book. If money is tight, please let us know and we can cover the cost. Look for sign-up information at the beginning of June.



PARISH NOTES

IN MEMORIAM

We have been saddened by the deaths of three members of our community in recent weeks. The inability to gather in person for a funeral has been hard. We remember and give thanks for the life of these three beloved members of our community:

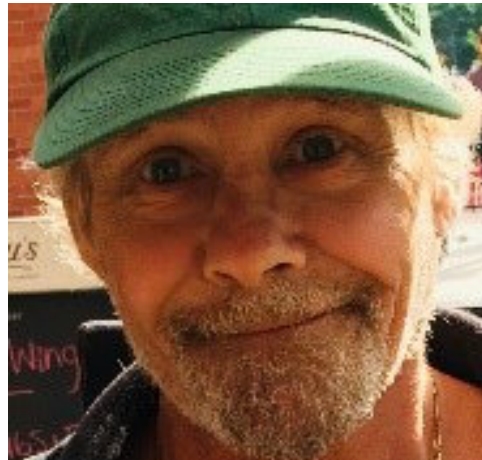
Wilma Boyce

Wilma died in early April from the novel coronavirus. Her many years at Redeemer includes the time of disestablishment and she saw the parish go through many changes over the span of time she was a member of the Church of the Redeemer. In recent years, her health prevented her from attending services where she was a faithful member of the 11.15AM community.



Terrance Sensabaugh

Many of you will remember Terrance Sensabaugh. He used to sit outside the church greeting parishioners as they came in for the Sunday service. He was usually there at his post throughout the week as well, selling his Outreach papers. With a smile in his eyes, and always ready to tip his hat to you, Terry was an important part of the Redeemer community for many years. After a long struggle with cancer, Terry went to be with his Lord on Thursday, April 20. May you rest in eternal peace, Terry. Thank you for the joy and the heart that you brought our community. A funeral service will take place at Redeemer when it is possible for the community to gather.



Janet Gasparotto

We remember with thanksgiving the life and love of Janet Gasparotto who attended the 11.15AM service where she was a wonderful part of the after-service hospitality team. Janet died on Friday, May 15 and a memorial gathering was held through Zoom on May 27. In honour of Janet's wishes, an in-person memorial and celebration of life will be scheduled at a later date once COVID-19 measures have been lifted.



*Give rest, O Christ, to your servants with all your saints,
where there is neither pain nor sorrow nor sighing, but
life everlasting.* ✝